

A New Policy Toward the Jews?

The greatest tragedy of modern times is the murder of Jews and other victims by Hitler. It is estimated that three million persons have been killed, often to the accompaniment of dreadful torture, and four million more are in the gravest danger. Within the past few days two new groups, official and unofficial, have been created in the United States to deal with this problem. The President has appointed Secretaries Hull, Morgenthau and Stimson to serve on a War Refugee Board, which will work through American diplomats throughout the world, coöperate with UNRRA, and aid the Intergovernmental Committee, which has been in existence for some years. The unofficial body, which consists of twelve distinguished Americans including Vice President Wallace, Supreme Court Justice Murphy and Wendell Willkie, will aid and supplement these efforts. The committee will seek to arouse the American conscience; will coöperate with similar groups in other countries; will fight anti-Semitism at home, and try to compel American officials, who are often shamefully negligent, to combat it.

We wish both these committees all possible success; the cause is so urgent that any effort to help must be warmly welcomed. Yet honesty compels us to add that the Intergovernmental Committee has never done anything effective to help Hitler's victims; that there is no sign that either the United States or Great Britain is prepared to let down the bars and permit immigration on the necessary scale; that some American diplomatic representatives abroad have themselves displayed anti-Semitism and that our diplomatic service as a whole, and our State Department, have never demonstrated any real concern at all consonant with the size of the tragedy. Mr. Breckenridge Long's recent remarks to a congressional committee on the number of refugees admitted to the United States overstated the number so enormously as to be a scandalous misrepresentation. Perhaps the size of the tragedy has at last opened the eyes of official Washington and we may finally expect real action. We hope so.

What Cost of Living?

The contention of labor that the cost of living has risen almost twice as far since 1941 as shown by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics index will find an answering response from many a consumer. A statistical dispute of this kind does not involve any question of veracity, however, and cannot even be settled with any close approach to scientific accuracy. Strictly speaking, there should be a separate cost-of-living index for each individual, since habits and circumstances vary widely. This variation is at a minimum when prices and ways of living are relatively stable, and becomes marked during the disturbances of a war economy. All an index can accomplish is to strike a rough

average, based on the buying habits of groups within given income limits and in certain specified localities.

The labor contention is that the BLS index overlooks too many of the war abnormalities. The foods priced for it, for instance, are only those under price control, but these foods are often scarce and the others have risen much more. Black markets are not sufficiently accounted for. Deterioration in quality is not taken into consideration—such as the lessened amount of ham in a ham sandwich, or the increased amount of potato in codfish cakes. The answer made is that the BLS index does after all cover the bulk of commonly used staples, and that the further one goes into such factors as labor mentions, the less statistical accuracy is possible. How can one measure deteriorations in quality generally?

What is necessary is a figure based on as good common-sense judgments as possible, with a rough approximation to the average experience. The principal function of the argument, in our opinion, is to emphasize the fact that no matter what good estimate is made, the cost of living has risen far above the point where it stood when the Little Steel formula for wages was adopted.

Hitler Becomes Taciturn

When a Hitler speech lasts only twenty minutes, it must be a sign that German defeat is approaching. On the anniversary of the Nazi accession to power he could think of nothing better to say than to harp on the old theme of the danger of Bolshevism. This effort was obviously directed toward domestic morale; apparently the Nazi leaders think the only way to keep the Germans fighting is to exploit their fear of Russia. In form, the speech was a warning to Britain that she cannot control the Continent even if she wins the war, but Hitler can hardly believe that such stale propaganda will be effective in London, at this late date. Apparently he fears that the Germans, seeing defeat staring them in the face, will become reconciled to it because of a hope for fair treatment by Britain. Don't be deceived, he says in effect, it would be the Soviet government which would dispose of you, and the Kremlin "would decide on the complete extermination of the German people."

The other red thread in the speech is the usual vituperation of the Jews. It is a little surprising that this old theme should be given so much prominence now, unless Hitler is counting on reports of increased anti-Semitism throughout the world. At any rate it should be a warning to us that cultivating prejudice against Jews is fighting Hitler's war for him.

"Peace Now"

The Japanese propaganda broadcast warmly praising the Peace Now movement in the United States has, we trust, sounded the deathknell of that organization.

There may have been some sincere pacifists in the activity at its beginning; but whether there were or not is now of little importance. They have been overlaid with crackpots, lunatic-fringers, Bundists and Coughlinites until the movement itself has become a tool of Axis diplomacy. To make peace now with Germany and Japan, leaving them in control of all or most of their booty, leaving their millions of innocent victims unavenged, would be only to create a truce while our enemies gathered strength to attack us once more. The world cannot live half slave and half free. We take it for granted that Peace Now is already under investigation by the FBI. Whatever the result of that investigation, the group should be dissolved forthwith.

Bill White of Emporia

William Allen White, who died a few days ago, had been one of the last remaining links with an older America which now seems incredibly far away. When he was born in Emporia, the Civil War had ended only three years earlier, and pioneer days in Kansas were vivid in everyone's memory. The sort of Middle Western America represented, for example, in his book, "The Court of Boyville" (1899), seems almost nearer to George Washington's day than it does to the world of 1944. Bill White lived a cosmopolitan life in the full sense of the word; he walked among the great men of the world as their equal; but he always kept his roots firmly in Emporia, where he knew everybody, everybody knew him, and he recorded the life of the town in *The Gazette* with unfailing energy, patience, kindliness and understanding. If in politics he was more liberal between elections than he was at the ballot box, when he usually voted the straight Republican ticket, in this he was faithful to the mores of Emporia itself, which generally did the same thing. It would be wrong to say that he represented a phase of American life that is now dead. He represented a quality of human being of whom we have always had some, but never enough.

Mr. Wallace and Equal Rights

Vice President Wallace startled everybody, a few days ago, by coming out in favor of the equal-rights amendment to the federal Constitution, which has so long and so hopelessly been advocated by the National Woman's Party. We take it for granted that all our readers agree with the Vice President, as we do, that every legal barrier which discriminates against women should be abolished. Tremendous strides have been made in this direction in the last few years, and the process is continuing. Opponents of the equal-rights amendment point out, however, that if it were written into the Constitution, a great deal of legislation specifically protecting women would be invalidated and future legislation of the same sort would become impossible. Those who know most about it feel that women do need the protection of laws against certain

types of industrial activity and that grave harm would be done if this legislation were abrogated. The New York Women's Trade Union League has assailed the Vice President's stand, pointing out that the Democratic Party is on record as opposing the amendment. William Green of the AFL has just reiterated the hostility of his organization. Surely there must be some sensible way to abolish discrimination against women without throwing out the baby with the bath. We wish the National Woman's Party would dedicate its energies to the task of finding it.

Postwar Plans in the House

The solid line against practical postwar planning which special privilege has been building for some time has now been completed. A committee of the House of Representatives has been set up to put its two bits' worth into the planning hopper. From the looks of the committee which Speaker Sam Rayburn has appointed, their recommendations will probably not be worth much more than that as a prescription for full employment and general security.

It is hard to imagine how Mr. Rayburn could have appointed a worse committee for the purpose. Clare Hoffman and John Rankin are not on it, but some of their best friends are. Rep. William Colmer of Mississippi, the chairman, has never done anything to confuse his record as a stanch Southern tory. Of the eighteen members, only six can be said to have shown any consideration at all for the rights of labor or the need for progressive action.



Stan MacGovern in *The New York Post*
Just Follow the Sample, Uncle